

communist countries like Vietnam or China.

Here is the problem with that premise. In each of those cases, the President engaged with Congress in a serious conversation and debate about the best path forward. A plan was developed, serious concessions were agreed to, and each nation mutually benefited from these meaningful actions.

Unfortunately, in the case of Cuba, President Obama has again decided to cut Congress out of the process and act alone with no real plan to accomplish his stated goal. This approach is the wrong way for our government to operate, and it has once again resulted in a bad deal.

Columnist Charles Krauthammer put it best when he said:

Do you know how to achieve a breakthrough in tough negotiations? Give everything away.

Mr. Speaker, I can't help but ask what reforms Cuba will make as a result of this deal. Let's not forget that this is the same Cuba, under the same regime, who during the cold war had nuclear missiles on their soil aimed at the United States of America.

This is the same Cuba that refuses to let the church operate freely. This is the same Cuba that worked with Venezuela and North Korea against the interests of the United States. This is the same Cuba that has been accused again and again of egregious human rights violations. Nothing has changed in those areas at all, and the Castro brothers are still in power.

Now, there is a path forward for improved diplomatic relations and ending the trade embargo. The Castro regime must go. Political activity must be legalized. Public commitments to free and fair elections must be made. An independent judiciary must be established. Rights to free speech and freedom of the press must be guaranteed.

Cuba must renounce the policy of being a staging area against the United States. Political prisoners must be freed, and the Cuban citizens must be treated with respect and dignity and be provided with the basic freedoms we often take for granted here in the U.S.

Under those conditions and with a President willing to work with Congress, the embargo could be lifted and progress could truly begin.

Mr. Speaker, I find myself once again coming to this floor to implore President Obama to abandon his ill-conceived, independent executive action and, instead, come to the Capitol, work with this Congress, share ideas, and collaborate; and together, we can make a real, positive impact on behalf of the American people.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH FUNDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call the Congress' attention to

what I think is our most important issue we face as a Congress and as a people, and that is preserving America's greatest asset, which is the health and lives of our citizens.

In doing so, I request, as I have done on many occasions, that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle join me in adequately funding our Nation's other department of defense—coequally important—the National Institutes of Health.

Yes, the Department of Defense is important, and we fund it more than adequately, more than they even ask for, and it protects us from ISIS and others that caused the great tragedy in Paris and has caused terror and havoc in Great Britain, Australia, and Canada and that I am sure will come to our shores sooner than we expect, but the National Institutes of Health protects us from disease, disease that threatens every American and every American's loved one.

The sequestration has cut billions from NIH's budget, and that is our country's foremost medical research center. It has helped billions of people across the country and across the world who suffer from heart disease, cancer, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, you name it, but we have inadequately funded the NIH.

It has not kept up with the level of inflation over the last decade. Based on that level of inflation, the funding we have given the NIH has resulted in a 10 percent diminution in funding on the purchasing power of the National Institutes of Health.

The likelihood of any one of us dying from a terrorist attack or from some weapon fired from North Korea or Russia or Iran is very slim, but the odds of us suffering from the diseases which I have mentioned previously is likely in our loved ones. We need to fight those diseases. We can do it, and we can successfully come up with treatments and cures if we fund the National Institutes of Health.

Supporting the NIH used to be a bipartisan commitment, especially seeing that every dollar invested results in about \$2.21 in economic growth. I hope that this new American Congress will see that and that my Republican colleagues will agree with me that we need to put a focus on our individual capital, the personal capital of people, their health and their well-being.

I talked to Representative MARINO recently, and he is going to join me in founding an NIH caucus. I think there is nothing more important. In the past, many times, when I have brought up funding for the NIH, friends on the other side have said: "Well, we will have to pay for it. If we put more money in it, then our children and grandchildren will be paying for the debt for years to come."

That may be true, but nevertheless, the children and the grandchildren will be receiving the benefits of the treatments and cures more likely than any of us will, for research takes a long time.

We also need to change our course in stem cell research. We have had problems with allowing scientists to use this opportunity to come through with great medical breakthroughs.

Federal funding is currently prohibited by the 1996 Dickey amendment to the appropriations bill that funds the NIH, but researchers around the world have dived headfirst into the field using stem cells and producing incredible findings and progress.

In 2010, a gentleman named Darek Fidyka, a Polish man, was stabbed multiple times in a knife attack, and he was paralyzed from the chest down, but thanks to stem cell research in Poland, in collaboration with researchers and doctors there and in the United Kingdom, Darek can now walk again with the help of a walker.

Dr. Geoff Raisman, the chair of neurological regeneration at University College London's Institute of Neurology called this development—and I agree with him—"more impressive than man walking on the Moon."

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We allowed a man who couldn't walk, couldn't stand to walk, and more will come from that research on stem cells and other scientific research. Darek otherwise would have been paralyzed for life, and now he is walking again thanks to private investment in stem cell research, but the government needs to participate.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for this Congress to adequately fund the National Institutes of Health, recognize its importance to our constituents who are important to us, and whose lives and health are the most important things that we can provide for them. It is time this country no longer turns a blind eye to research, and to stem cell research in particular. I urge my colleagues to seize the opportunities offered by this new Congress and join me in the efforts to fund the National Institutes of Health and to join the National Institutes of Health Caucus.

FIXING THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it is an exciting honor to address the people's House for the first time.

The 114th Congress carries with it a great opportunity to address the challenges our Nation faces. One priority of the new American Congress is fixing our broken health care system. We have all heard from small businesses and companies who have been forced to lay off workers due to the President's health care law, consequently slowing innovation that drives our Nation and slowing the pace at which that innovation can improve public health outcomes for all Americans.

This week I am proud to cosponsor H.R. 160 that will repeal the medical